

# Socialist Worker



# Anglo tapes show exactly why we need to protest

## Brazil shows that protests can win

THE taped conversations of two Anglo Irish bank directors reveal how big business lies and dictates to the government.

They told the government they needed €7 billion to cover their losses but the eventual cost turned out to be at least €28 billion.

*'If the Central Bank saw the enormity of it up front, they might decide they have a choice. You know what I mean. They might say the cost to the taxpayer is too high... if it doesn't look too big at the outset, if it looks big, big enough, but not too big... you have a chance.'* is how one director put it.

The taped conversation shows that company directors know exactly how to manipulate the government. It was like a puppet master dictating how their puppets should act. It was a rare glimpse into how power really operates in Ireland.

### People's resistance

But it also shows how we need a big, militant movement of 'people power' to oppose them. We will never beat the elite if we simply wait for new politicians to be elected. We need to get on the streets, protest and take action to bring them down a peg or two.

Mass protests get results – even though the corporate media never tell you this.

Here are just some examples

■ The government had a policy of selling off the trees in Coillte owned forests. Former Taoiseach Bertie Ahern had even become involved in a major corporation which wanted to benefit from privatisation. But a protest movement developed quickly and pushed them back. Thousands of people turned up to a gathering in Avondale and later over twenty five different protests occurred across the country. The government knew that if they carried through with privatisation, they would face even greater outrage – so they backed down.

■ When the Labour Minister Ruairí Quinn tried to remove funding from



PEI's schools, the poorest areas to be privatised buses and big numbers for a protest outside the Dáil. So many people turned out, that the government took fright and backed down.

■ Home helps also scored a partial victory over the government when they fought back against cut backs with public meetings and protests. Extra funding was suddenly found to give some relief – although it was not enough to reverse all the cuts.

■ Internationally millions of people protesting on the streets of Brazil have reversed a set of transport fare hikes and won assurances from the authorities that more money will go into better public service including health and education.

None of this would have happened without the masses. But these examples are never highlighted because the media co-operate with the main strategy of the government.

### Media blackout

They want to inculcate a sense of defeatism in us so that we trot out the familiar line 'Ah sure, what can you do'.

Yet when people fight back, they stand a chance of winning. When we lie down, we will always be defeated.

Governments all over the world have started to shake in fear when their people mobilise on the streets. The latest examples in Brazil and Turkey show that when protests erupt our rulers get terrified.

We need to bring the same spirit to Ireland – and that means a break from an attitude that the only thing we can do is 'Give out on Joe Duffy'.

We need to target our anger on the Dáil. When the politicians return after their long summer break, they need to be confronted regularly with thousands on the streets.

They need to feel the raw anger of people power so that when they next get a phone call from bankers, they will think twice about spending people's money on their gambling debts.

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#### Where next for the anti-property tax campaign?

# G8 security fiasco: The tip of the iceberg



By Maire McGrath

IN the lead up to the G8 summit in Enniskillen Co. Fermanagh, state broadcasters put the emphasis on the potential criminality of protesters.

However amidst the environmentalists, anti-capitalists, and activists; the waves of armed police were by far the most threatening element.

The security operation came to a cost of £50 million.

An extra 3,600 police officers had been drafted into the North from Britain while a total of about 8,000 police officers were on summit duty.

Even air and water patrols were deemed necessary.

This exposes a new level of social control and such disproportionate measures are not unique to this protest.

Recent demonstrations worldwide have been subjected not only to over policing, but to heavy handed treatment at the hands of those paid to protect citizens.

## Rossport

As the "Shell to Sea" campaign gears up for another annual Rossport Solidarity Camp with a week of actions from 21-30 June; images and videos of the brutal treatment of protesters at the hands of Gardai are once again going viral on social media sites.

One particularly brutal assault resulted in the Garda Ombudsman recommending disciplinary action be taken against one Garda Superintendent.

## Istanbul

The massive protests in Turkey have been responded to with great violence by the police force.

Witnesses from Turkey have said how police forces are firing tear gas directly into people's line of sight - despite regulations in place which require them to aim in an

oblique, upward direction. Tear gas and pepper spray have been thrown at protesters in confined spaces - something of concern to human rights watchdogs.

Prime Minister Erdogan's threat of calling in the military is one which would strike a nerve in a country which has fought hard and long to restrain the power of the military.

The authorities in Brazil have responded in a very similar manner to their Turkish counterparts; making liberal use of tear gas, rubber bullets and batons.

The largely peaceful protests even erupted with chants of "No violence! No violence!" in response to a minority element of vandals.

## Frankfurt

At the end of May, 200 protesters travelling from Berlin to an anti-capitalist "Blockupy" demonstration in Frankfurt were detained by police for six hours in their buses - without toilets - en route.

Only those who consented to being searched and filmed were eventually allowed to proceed to the protest.

## Underlying Causes

The ultimate cause of this new mode of social control couldn't be clearer.

The despair and misery being forced onto ordinary people the world over means that social explosions become inevitable.

Growing numbers of discontented people are now revolting against this rotten system forcing the capitalist state apparatus to applying counter pressure through the police and military forces.

This ultimately stems from ruling class fear of the power of the people, as far from dissuading us from taking to the streets, this should encourage us that people's resistance is gaining ground.

# Protests organised against special needs cuts



By James O'Toole

ON Wednesday 19 June the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) announced a 10% cut in teaching hours for Special Needs Assistants commencing from September 2013.

This will mean those children with special educational requirements will have to cope with 15 minutes less support daily.

That brings to 25% the cuts to children with autism, physical disabilities, severe or profound learning disabilities, emotional disturbance and others in mainstream schools.

By definition SNA's support some of the most vulnerable members of society.

A single SNA is expected to care for multiple children with an array of disabilities, such as hearing or mobility.

This is now becoming increasingly unworkable and is indicative of the lack of understanding on the part of the government towards the vulnerable in our society.

The NCSE has confirmed this latest cut as an ever growing demand is not being met with adequate resources.

## Reasonable?

Minister for Education, Ruairí Quinn, claims that this is not a cut and that the teachers are being asked to do more work for the same wage.

Quinn's own son went to one of the top private schools in the country.

Yet he is completely at ease with forcing vulnerable children even further into marginalisation.

Moreover, this blatant disregard for peoples needs is typical of the contempt this Government has shown towards working people with Tánaiste, Eamon Gilmore, labeling the cuts as 'reasonable' and even 'sensible'.

Meanwhile the state has managed to smuggle in numerous tax breaks and sweetheart deals for the country's rich-

est residents.

In budget 2011 the state agreed to provide tax relief to foreign executives who sent their children to private schools.

Fees of up to €5,000 a year could be written off and, in addition, 30 percent of all income accruing to foreign executives up to €500,000 a year was automatically written off for tax purposes, representing a potential saving of €52,275.

All of this was introduced against a background of extreme austerity as single parents, those on rental income supplement, and social welfare recipients experienced significant falls in their income in the same budget.

## Protest

In response the Irish National Teachers Organisation has organised a protest to the Dáil for Wednesday 26 June.

Speaking to the media, Sheila Nunan, General Secretary of the INTO, stated that primary schools would no longer be able to meet children's special needs.

"No amount of smokescreen and spin can hide the extent of this cutback."

"A 25% cutback in resource hours is a significant policy failure that will have long-term implications."

"Effectively, this government is undermining the principle of inclusive schools," said Ms Nunan.

"Without resources schools cannot support the integration of special needs children."

Expecting special needs children to develop with three quarters of the resources in some of the most over-crowded classrooms in the EU is preposterous."

These protests need to continue until the Government listens to the demands from workers and parents of special needs children.

It's about time that their interests were put before those of the bondholders.

As the SNAs cuts are announced Socialist Worker asks one mother how they will affect her family

Rein could you please explain what effect the ongoing SNA cuts are having on your personal situation?

The last round of cuts affected my son badly. He used to have a half-time SNA.

From last year this was reduced to intermittent access to an SNA.

The SNA had to divide her time between 3 children in two different classrooms which didn't make sense as SNAs are for care needs.

How can you identify a care need of a child if you are in another room? Enda Kenny was very clever in the Dáil saying no child would be without access to an SNA as opposed to having an SNA.

My son is moving to secondary but there is no definite decision yet on his allocation.

God only knows how this latest cut will affect him

This sounds particularly serious, could you also explain the how the cut will affect the allocation within your local school?

Well I know that Our With Barracks National School is losing 36 hours SNA provision.

That actually means that one SNA is losing her job.

On top of this there is a 10% cut in resource hours for children.

My son was entitled to 4 hours per week - this will now be reduced to 3.5 hours.

They only make the provision around 11am in late June.

This means that parents are getting their allocation in July when it is too late to mobilise against the decision.

This surely makes it all the more important to mobilise now. Will you be supporting the INTO demonstration on 26 July?

Absolutely.

We have been working hard to make sure there will be good support from our school for this protest.

The parents association in the school sent a text to everyone about Wednesday.

I really think people power is the only way.

Over the last two years the protests from schools with parents, teachers and children united in fighting the cuts shamed the government not to cut as much as they had wanted. However, they brought in sneaky cuts.

For example, they held back allocating 450 SNA's to children supposedly just in case the need arose during the year for children showing up with special requirements.



Finally what do you think the long term effects will be for the children and for society at large?

The most worrying effect of all this is that schools will discriminate against children with disabilities attending mainstream schools.

Some schools are saying they would be unable to take on a child if they can't get the necessary resources.

This already happened to Aisling Mc Auliffe in St Raphael's in Celbridge, with her child having to wait until well after the school started before he could actually start.

I was also told by a secondary school that they couldn't cater for special needs as they didn't have the resources.

The long term effect of this is socially isolating children who have different needs leading to intolerance and discrimination.

It is widely accepted that all children benefit from having children with different needs in a classroom where tolerance and acceptance is key to everyone learning and educating together.

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## What Socialists Say



# The Haddington Proposals: A road to nowhere

LAST week Siptu members voted by a margin of three to one to accept the terms of the Haddington Road agreement.

This comes on the back of an acceptance by the INMO and various smaller union and representative bodies.

With the INTO also recommending acceptance it is almost certain that the proposals will now be enacted.

Yet, in essence, this deal is exactly the same as that decisively defeated under the auspices of Croke Park Two (CPII).

The levels of cuts remain at €1 billion and there will be a massive increase in hours worked by frontline staff throughout the public services.

The obvious question then is what has changed? The answer is complex, but involves a combination of collective self-doubt, state led intimidation and a sense of holding what we have in the absence of any clear alternative.

## Union complicity

In the run up to the second ballot two decisive events occurred.

The first was the disgraceful behaviour of union leaders filing back into talks to be picked apart one by one.

The result of the CPII ballot was decisive.

This should have inspired union leaders to stand together in a collective show of strength and unity.

Had they done so, a real alternative could have been constructed in which union representatives demanded cuts to the very wealthy.

Currently there are over 100,000 people earning around €185,000 (on average) and the result of the CP ballot should have inspired the union leaders to make them pay.

Had they collectively demanded this the union bureaucrats would have been celebrated.

In this scenario, moreover, there is little doubt that the government would have buckled.

The thoughts of 290,000 determined trade unionists would have been a game changer.

Labour in particular would have been extremely vulnerable.

But instead the union leaders connived with the government and allowed themselves to be divided.

In response, Fine Gael and Labour felt emboldened to go on the offensive.

## Legislation

Alongside their divide and conquer tactics, the government have simultaneously engaged in the most outrageous levels of intimidation.

As union members were casting their ballots, they were continually reminded that they faced pay cuts of up to 7% should they refuse to play ball.

With this threat of legislation hanging over them and a sense that their leaders were unwilling to fight, many union members have concluded that Haddington Road is the lesser of two evils.

Does this mean that they are happy with this outcome? Absolutely not.

Many union members have accepted these proposals under extreme duress and this leaves significant bitterness that will not be easily forgotten.

Like those in the property tax campaign who have been systematically intimidated there is a whole layer of trade union activists who are now seething with the government.

Moreover, when given half a chance many of these people have stood up before.

This explains the initial rejection of CPII and last year's momentous refusal to pay the household charges.

Unfortunately however, they do not yet have the collective confidence or organisational capacity to continue the fight to the bitter end.

Building this confidence and organisational capacity is the job of every socialist and progressive trade unionist.

The government may have won the latest battle, but as the example of Brazil and Turkey shows, intimidation has its limits.

## Analysis

# A new era of revolt



By Kieran Allen

THREE different countries – three different revolts.

This suggests there is a pattern emerging.

More than a million people have joined protests in Brazil after a rise in bus fares.

It started with small protests but escalated quickly. The grievances were summed up in the slogans: "Stop corruption.

"Change Brazil"; "Halt evictions"; "Come to the street, it's the only place we don't pay taxes"; "Government failure to understand education will lead to revolution".

## Shocked

It has also caught the government completely unaware. "We do not understand what has happened" proclaimed the secretary of the ruling party, "but we do not want to be found on the wrong side of history.

Before Brazil it was Turkey.

Once again, a "small issue" triggered an explosion of outrage about how society is run.

A plan to build a shopping centre in a public park became a focal point for anger against an authoritarian government.

Before Turkey, it was Bulgaria. Here a rise in electricity prices led to mass outrage that brought a government down. The same pattern was in evidence.

The issue moved from the price of electricity to the whole way that society was run.

Each revolt echoes a previous one. Occupy masks appear and clear links are made with other countries. What began in Tahrir square in Egypt with the Arab Spring has become a template for many others to follow.

Behind these episodic revolts is a growing momentum that is even more profound.

## Global Crisis

Global capitalism entered a new era after the crash of 2008.

Before the crash, a "Washington Consensus" prevailed and governments told their population that "there could be no intervention in the market".

When workers in Waterford Crystal, for example, occupied their plant to demand government support to preserve their jobs, they were told that subsidies were against EU rules.

But as soon as the banks collapsed, the rules changed and billions were made available.

It is estimated that €10 trillion (€10,000

billion) has been put in the global banking system since the crash.

In every country, the mass of people are forced to pay for the crimes of the economic elite.

What we are witnessing, is more intensified neo-liberalism at the bottom – and hand outs for the wealthy at the top.

A second factor in triggering the revolts is the crisis of representation.

The last three revolts have been against elected governments because vast numbers have become aware of the fake nature of modern democracy.

In the Western model of democracy, parties mobilise vast sums from big business to "brand" themselves and echo back sentiments they picked up in focus groups.

But once elected, they treat their promises as if they were lies used to win a game show.

Every change of government brings continuity with past policies.

This has led to a realisation that elected leaders are not answerable to their people but to the big financial interests that they serve.

## Police Brutality

As discontent grows, there are also significant shifts in the nature of policing.

Almost every country now has its own special riot police, equipped with "robocop equipment".



# Where next for the Campaign Against Property Tax?



CAHWT protesters show the government the red card in a mass show of strength and unity on the streets of Dublin

By Brian O'Boyle

OVER the last 18 months the Campaign Against Household and Water Taxes (CAHWT) has been the highpoint in the fight against austerity in Ireland.

Local committees have sprung up in towns across the country with activists organising numerous protests and local meetings.

Nationally the campaign has mobilised thousands on the streets of Dublin and Galway, whilst last year's boycott represented a significant setback for the government and the Troika.

Given half a chance, more than a million home owners chose to defy the government.

The household charge was an abject failure and the government knew that they had to respond.

This year's decision to use the revenue commissioners to collect the property tax proved a master stroke in tactical awareness.

Instead of feeling confident, the general refrain became one of bitter resignation as people came to believe that 'the government will get the money no matter what we do'.

This sense of fatalism alongside a mass campaign of state repression has convinced upwards of 85% to register and pay.

This is a setback by anyone's standards. But rather than allowing ourselves to slip into frustration, we must take a leaf out of the government's book.

This means reviewing our tactics and renewing the struggle.

## NUANCED

Despite the setback there are certainly things to be optimistic about.

First off, the network of activists that has emerged around the CAHWT is extremely important.

Two years ago this network simply didn't exist.

Today, it is the most extensive anti-austerity movement in the country, with militants everywhere gaining valuable experience in the campaign against cutbacks.

Secondly, there is a growing layer of people who are absolutely raging with the government.

Even though the majority have now paid, there is little doubt that hundreds of thousands did so under extreme duress.

Like in Turkey and Brazil this leads to an underlying powder-keg of emotions with people willing to fight given half the chance of scoring a victory.

Militants in the campaign have to relate

to this sentiment, encouraging those that have already paid and supporting those who have been able to hold firm.

Currently there are between 100,000 and 200,000 that have yet to register and this is a third reason to sustain our determination.

The campaign owes it to these people to stand alongside them but we must learn lessons if we are going to succeed.

## Tactics

Focusing on the boycott was clearly a mistake.

From the outset the government registered this as the weak under belly of the campaign as legislation to avoid the boycott was clearly within their powers.

Although the campaign did organise street protests these were never central enough to the overall strategy.

There was also reluctance in many places to generalise the CAHWT into a truly anti-austerity movement.

This must now change.

Over the coming weeks we must broaden the battle field.

Currently there are groups fighting to save schools and hospitals, anti-frackers and environmentalists, single parents and disability activists, campaigners fighting cuts to special needs assistants etc.

Surely we must now fight to link up

these campaigns on the basis of mutual support and solidarity.

No campaign has a monopoly in the fight against austerity.

By standing together and learning from each other we can turn the individual successes of campaigns like those against cuts to home help hours into a general success against austerity.

Just this week we have witnessed the strength of people power as the government reversed its decision to privatise our forests.

This would have been unthinkable without thousands of people actively mobilising.

Street protests work and so alongside broadening the struggles we need to renew our faith in the power of mass public mobilisations.

## Getting political

Allied to the push for generalizing tactics we must also deepen our political analysis.

Cynicism against politicians is completely understandable, but whether we realise it or not, 'keeping politics out' is really code for letting the bankers and the speculators of the hook.

Those of us on the Left want the political and economic elites to pay for the crisis.

This is also true of the vast bulk of

campaigners within the CAHWT.

However by arguing to keep politics out, we end up with a single issue that can easily be defeated.

At meetings campaigners need to become more comfortable with the politics of Left and Right.

If you want an end to the bank bailouts and the obscene concentrations of political power then you are on the Left.

This should now become a badge of honour as it means nothing more than the politics of people power, radical democracy and decent services for everyone.

Socialists need to argue for highly political slogans such as (1) Tax the rich (2) no more banker bailouts (3) no more cuts to social welfare (4) Jobs for all as part of a national campaign that offers a new vision.

## Local elections

Challenging the government in every arena also means standing candidates in the local elections.

Government councillors must experience people's anger, but it is important to keep these elections in their rightful places.

If the CAHWT simply morphs into a local election vehicle it will confirm the worst fears of the cynics who believe that political activists are all the same.

More importantly, an overwhelming focus on elections will suck the life out of the struggle on the streets.

This would be disastrous for the movement and so whilst the CAHWT should endorse a whole range of anti-austerity candidates, we mustn't focus overwhelmingly on elections.

The struggles in Egypt and Greece, Turkey and Brazil all emerged through the power of the masses.

In none of these places was the election of local councillors the spark that led to resistance.

Rather it was the networks of activists that helped to turn the powder keg of seething discontent into a radical movement for social change.

Even if the campaign manages to get 20-50 people elected they will only be successful if they manage to stir up resistance.

Without this, the austerity will continue and the lives of ordinary people will hardly change.

This is why we must subordinate the electoral strategy to the mass movement on the streets and the workplaces.

Budget day is a great opportunity.

Let's make sure that CAHWT mobilizes massive numbers in a 'winter of discontent' for our political masters.

## OPEN LETTER

**Pro-life (as long as you're a right-wing bigoted man)**

To John Waters,

Reading your article in the Irish Catholic would make anyone with progressive views sick to their stomach.

It consists of attack after attack on women, with arguments that we are 'emotionally manipulative' and 'selfish' combined with the insult that suicidality during pregnancy is a 'theoretical idea'.

The reason it warrants a response is because you expose the reality that the 'pro-life' position is inherently anti-women.

Firstly, you begin by comparing a suicidal woman having an abortion with a suicidal man murdering his partner.

As one commentator has already mentioned, this comparison is not only disgusting, but makes no sense.

The fact that you are happy to equate the life of a woman to a clump of cells is truly mind-blowing.

Not to mention the fact that the man has the option of leaving his partner while the suicidal woman has no other option but to have a termination.

## Bigot

In your mind women have long-since manipulated men in Ireland, claiming 'victim status' so we can get to 'kill babies'.

This view of women as manipulators and schemers is absolutely abhorrent.

In reality, women in Ireland have faced huge inequality and sexism throughout the 20th Century compared to those in other European countries.

The exclusion of women from the workforce, lower wages, the ban on contraception, divorce, abortion and deficient public services (like childcare) have had a massive negative impact on women's lives. The notion that the risk of suicide during pregnancy is a 'theoretical idea' is also disgusting.

I really wish you could have said that to the thirteen year old at the centre of the X case in 1992, who was pregnant from rape and felt that she would rather take her own life than give birth to the baby.

In reality, women have unwanted pregnancies, which they cannot go through with, for whatever reason.

The distrust of women you display brings us back to days of the Magdalene laundries when women were locked up as slaves, abused and mistreated.

## Control

Your anti-women sentiment has exposed the true nature of the anti-abortion lobby.

The argument is not about 'life', but about living women, and the need of the Catholic Church and the capitalist system to control us.

## Dying breed

Thankfully, people like you are a dying breed.

The vast majority of young people in Ireland support a woman's right to choose and more than 80% of the population support X case legislation.

Unfortunately the Catholic Church has come back from its grave with dusty old men, backed by US funding, attempting to stop legislation to save women's lives.

The legislation proposed by the Government does not come close to what is needed.

The 14 years jail sentence for procuring or helping to procure an abortion is really a reminder of the dark past in Ireland and has to be removed.

Luckily young women and men are daily leaving behind your barbarism, whilst standing tall against those who wish to limit and control them.

Suitably disgusted,  
MADELEINE JUHANSSON



# Labour Pains as Nulty resigns

By Deirdre Harvey

LAST week Patrick Nulty became the first sitting Labour TD to formally leave the party.

Nulty who won the Dublin West by-election in 2011 had already lost the party whip for voting against the budget the following December.

Nulty has consistently argued against the most regressive measures of the coalition government.

However the cuts to SNA hours announced last week have proven the final straw for a deputy personally dedicated to working for the poor and disadvantaged.

Speaking to the media, Nulty lamented the fact that "Ireland is now a more unequal society than when labour entered government".

This, he said, had resulted in "peoples trust in the political system being broken as the government continues to hit the most vulnerable in society".

In his most barbed comments Nulty accused the Labour leadership of "bringing the political system into disrepute by sacrificing core democratic social demands for personal political ambition".

Instead of "pursuing social justice, equality and the creation of full employment the Government has imposed savage cuts to housing adaption grants specifically provided



to people with disabilities...published personal insolvency guidelines which seek to micro manage the personal finances of hard pressed families [and] cut Child Benefit which Labour had

sworn to protect."

Nulty's comments will have stung a Labour leadership desperately trying to hold its troops in line in the face of continuous attacks on their

natural constituents.

As the local elections draw closer many within the party will have thoughts about their personal circumstances and this no doubt

partly explains Gilmore's dismissal of Nulty as a politician content to "scramble for the comfort of the backbenches".

Anyone familiar with the situation will realise that this is merely smoke and mirrors.

Gilmore has now lost five sitting TD's along with Nessa Childers (MEP) and Senator James Heffernan from the Labour Parliamentary Party.

To make matters worse two Wicklow councillors have also resigned from the party.

In a joint statement, Tom Fortune and Barry Nevin said they "no longer believe that the party holds compatible values with their own" particularly with regard to the "unacceptable centralisation that is antidemocratic in its nature".

Like many social democratic parties across Europe, Labour is finding it tough to impose savage cuts whilst holding onto its founding principles.

This explains the rise of 'a left of Labour' in many countries with Syriza in Greece being the obvious example.

Whether or not a force like this can emerge in Ireland remains to be seen.

But the reality is that Labour will continue to suffer so long as it sells out its values for ministerial salaries and lavish pensions.

## Sinn Fein planning a 'developers charter'

By Goretti Morgan

THE Planning Bill currently before the Assembly was always going to favour developers, particularly as Clauses 2 and 6 provide for 'economic considerations' to be given greater weight than other considerations when determining individual planning applications.

Last minute amendments to the Bill tabled by the Sinn Fein and the DUP, have however, turned the Bill into a developers' charter.

They will give new powers to the Office of First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM – Peter Robinson and Martin McGuinness) to declare an area a 'significant economic zone' and to push through planning permission for any proposed development within that zone.

The amendments also limit the time in which local communities can take a judicial review of such a decision from twelve weeks to six.

Even more concerning, it limits the range of issues that can be considered at Judicial Review to questions of EU law and the Convention on Human Rights.

Issues such as the environmental, heritage or wildlife impact cannot be judicially reviewed if the amendments are passed.

If such a law had been available to Shell, the Ballinaboy Roosport refinery would have been built years ago.

The implications of this move for democracy and for the environment are staggering.

OFMDFM are grabbing



more and more powers for itself already.

To grab powers now from an SDLP Minister suggests that the DUP/Sinn Fein stranglehold at Stormont is being extended.

Even right-wing commentators are expressing concerns at the democratic implications.

### Dangerous

Letting OFMDFM have powers to make planning decisions is particularly dangerous as it will invite corruption by politicians.

It is already the case that a close relationship has been shown to exist between the DUP and developers.

Indeed, Peter Robinson and his wife Iris have been shown to have a very 'special' relationship with some developers, to the extent that she was able to ask for donations of £50,000 for her young lover's business with an ease that Bertie Ahern would have admired.

This is further evidence of two Sinn Fein's – the one that's in government in the North and embraces neo-liberalism and the one in the South that is supposed to be opposed to it.

Sinn Fein's website states that "Sinn Fein is...committed to the principle of sustainable development..."

"We believe that all economic activity and policy decisions should be environmentally proofed."

It goes on to say that Sinn Fein will work for "Involvement of all interested groups in the planning and implementation of policy".

Evidently someone needs to tell their people in Stormont so.

To read more about problems with the Planning Bill even prior to these SF/DUP amendments, see Eamonn McCann's article in the Belfast Telegraph:

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/opinion/columnists/realism-in-mccanns/food-campaigners-chance-to-go-back-to-their-tales-28132586.htm>

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**As the protests in Turkey continue Socialist Worker spoke to Revolutionary Socialist Memet Uludag about his historic experiences...**

# On the ground in Taksim Square

## Why did the movement in Taksim Square explode?

Mainly it was a response to police brutality coupled with an underlying level of discontentment.

During the first 3 weeks of the protests we saw ever escalating police violence to end the protests.

This did not work and despite being kicked-out of Gezi Park and the Taksim Square a few times, ever bigger numbers returned to these places.

While the government on one hand rejected demands from the protestors and the Taksim Solidarity group in relation to stopping the re-development of Gezi Park, Prime Minister Erdogan did discuss the events with various people (actors, writer's activists etc).

Unfortunately most of the people attending these meetings were not representing the campaigners in Gezi Park.

Currently there is an interim court decision to stop all building work.

The government also announced that they will run a referendum on the future of the park.

This was an attempt to win what they have lost on the ground using the ballot box. So protest has so far been effective.

## What did you experience when you arrived in Gezi Park?

I arrived to Gezi Park on Friday 14 June.

The first thing that hits you is the huge numbers in the park and the variety of political parties, civil society and various other groups.

There were seemingly around 110-120 different groups resident in the park.

Although it looked chaotic at first, there was a very significant level of organisation.

There were kitchens, food stalls, medical tents, a radio station, a TV Stream station, a group of people acting as the fire brigade.

The big platform at the centre was the main stage of the park.

Politically, the park was debating the next steps after the announcements from the government.

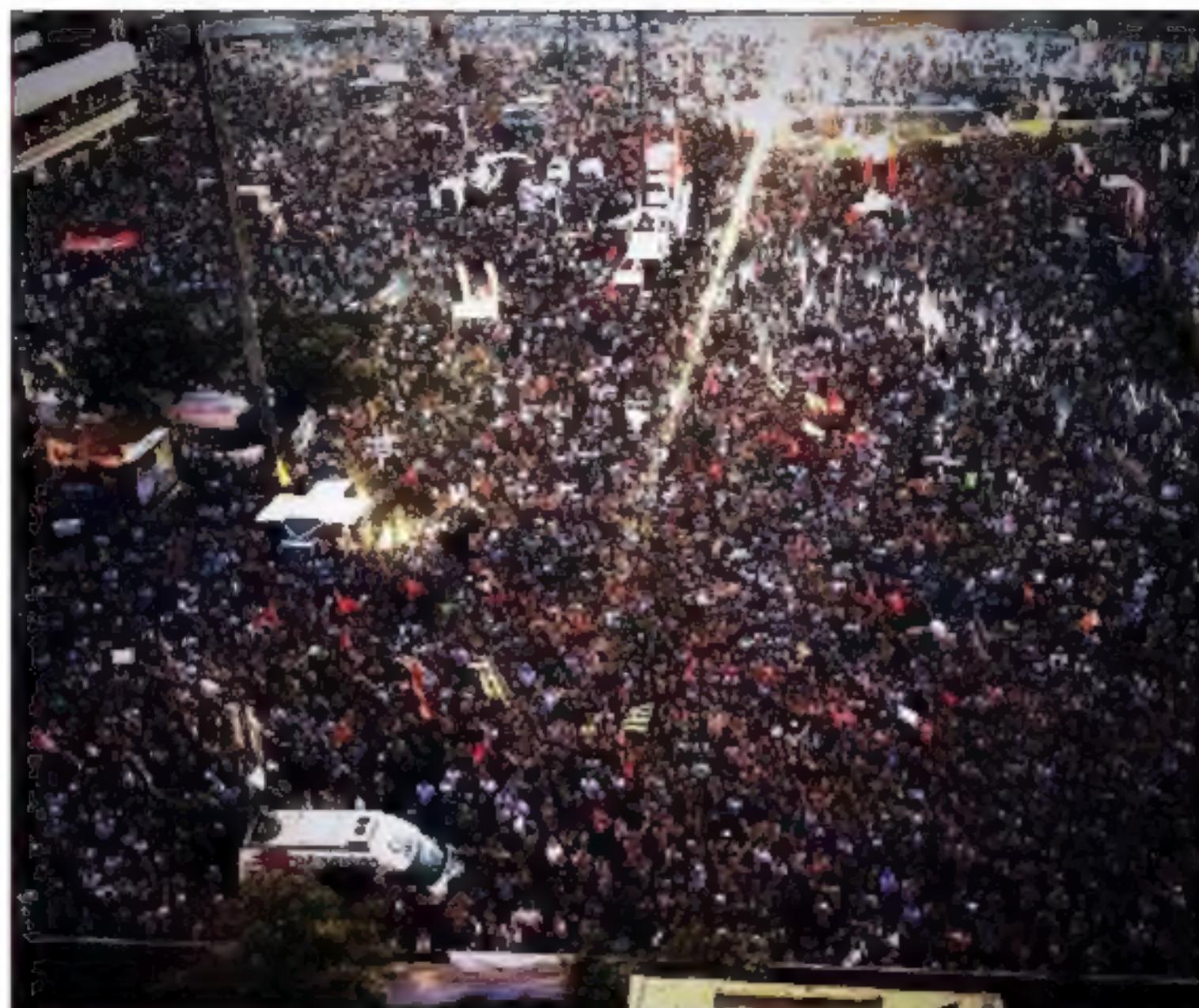
The park was divided into 7 districts and each one was discussing the response to the move by the government.

These forums were also established to elect delegates from each district.

This process was at the very beginning.

There was a relaxed and joyful atmosphere in the park and there was a mood of small but very significant victory.

There were no expectations of immediate police action over the weekend ahead.



## What did happen over the following weekend?

On the Saturday the park and Taksim Square were full of people.

As the day progressed, even bigger crowds gathered. In the evening the police ordered that the park be cleared immediately and within 30 minutes they moved in with water cannon trucks and tear gas.

Thousands of people were pushed out of Taksim Square and the camp in Gezi Park was smashed.

Police attacks went on continually around the Park and Taksim Area.

Despite this people gathered in various districts of Istanbul and continued protesting until the early hours of Sunday morning.

On Sunday police moved again, entering districts of Istanbul, whilst the Taksim Area was declared closed to the public.

All day on Sunday groups tried to march to Taksim Square and Gezi Park but were not able to reach the area.

There were also protests in other cities.

## What happened next?

Early last week different forms of protest

were staged in Istanbul and other cities.

People showed their resistance by silently standing in public places and squares. Despite being peaceful there were further arrests.

In response neighbourhoods decided to organise local forums.

There are now neighbourhood forums on-going in Istanbul and other cities.

These are extremely significant as some of them are attended by thousands of participants.

In the forums people discuss the next steps and the demands they should make on the government.

These are open for everybody and people exchange their views and opinions freely. There are up to 37 district forums in Istanbul.

In some cities police attempted to disperse these gatherings but they were not successful.

Crucially there are political as well as practical demands.

The original main demands of Gezi Park were

- Stop the destruction of Gezi Park with the building of shopping centre.
- Ban the use of tear gas.
- Investigate the police violence and

bring those responsible to justice.

■ Immediate release of all arrested protestors.

There are also strong demands for the resignation of the Prime Minister Erdogan.

Although the Gezi Park development is fully stopped, the police violence continues.

So far there are 4 people dead, almost 10,000 people injured and hundreds arrested. Since the beginning, there have been protests in 79 cities attended by more than five million people.

Meanwhile 130,000 tear gas canisters were fired by the police.

Protests started as a campaign against the destruction of the Gezi Park to build as shopping centre, but since then political demands for democratic, human rights and freedom have been raised.

From a small spark the protest movement exploded and we have scored a first victory against government.

As I write the forums are on-going sites of democratic discussion.

A large portion of society is outraged with AKP policies and police brutality and the next step will hopefully be to push for even greater concessions.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Berlusconi guilty of rape

ON Monday 25 June former Italian prime minister, Silvio Berlusconi, was handed a seven-year jail sentence for abuse of office and paying for sex with a minor.

Disgracefully however, he will not serve any jail time before he has exhausted a lengthy appeals process.

In Italy there is a three strike system that allows the super-rich to delay their guilty verdict for a number of years.

As Berlusconi is now 76 this makes it likely that regardless of the merits of the case, he will never see the inside of a cell.

Predictably Berlusconi went on the offensive arguing that "An incredible sentence has been issued of a violence never seen or heard of before, to try to eliminate me from the political life of this country".



In reality all of the evidence showed that the billionaire tycoon had hired a group of women, some of whom were under 18, for his own sexual gratification.

A panel of three women judges also convicted Berlusconi of abuse of office by arranging to have the woman at the centre of the controversy released from custody when she was later arrested for a separate incident.

Last month an appeals court also upheld a four-year jail sentence against Berlusconi for orchestrating a tax fraud scheme in his business dealings - leaving him with just one more appeal, at the Supreme Court.

Hopefully this will see him go to jail in the very near future.

## 'Some other voices from the Square'

Celin is 27 and Kurdish. The oil tanker sailor's arm was broken when police beat him with a baton

"Erdogan tells other countries they need democracy—but this isn't democracy."

We don't believe or trust the government. For years Turkish people have been told lies about Kurdish people.

They were told we had no language, no culture, no flag or identity.

Every morning in school we had to say we were happy to be a Turk. I don't believe the government will bring peace."

Zuhail is a member of the HDK, an umbrella group of left organisations

"Everybody wants real peace for Kurds, with rights to language, culture, and political rights. Nobody believes the government.

Troops are leaving the Kurdish area but we don't see any new democratic processes.

They are discussing a new constitution but they are not making any progress.

We need to force the government to make a real peace for all cultures, ethnicities and beliefs.

There are some nationalist groups here but the whole thing is not like that. Some people have the flag but it is not a political message for them."



Ugur Guneskaya is 24 and a literature student in Istanbul. "People are rebelling against the authoritarian government policies on alcohol, education,

the environment and urban development.

We are also angry at the police pressure used against students.

People carry the national flag because of this movement's newness. Because the movement is so new there is not one symbol.

Everyone is coming with their own symbol which they feel comfortable with.

We have been fighting for many years against the AKP. We don't want their neoliberalism and their repressive policies.

We want the AKP to go but the other parties are not enough.

We don't want any of them

We fight in the streets and the new world will be won in the streets. This process is now starting.

We know Erdogan is thinking of strategies to destroy this place. He tries to divide protesters by talking about marginal groups and normal groups, but this is not true.

People are here for one aim—Gezi Park.

Erdogan is trying to negotiate with people close to him, but they don't reflect our ideas and we don't recognise them.

Now he proposes a referendum on the park. Why have a referendum on this? We don't have a referendum on cyanide poisoning in gold mining."

# Brazil rises up

By James O'Leary

LAST weekend more than 250,000 people protested on the streets of Brazil.

This followed protests the previous week that witnessed over 1 million on the streets in a single night.

The movement, which is now calling for the jailing of corrupt politicians, began with protests over hikes in bus fares.

They also want legislation known as PEC 37 repealed as this limits the power of federal prosecutors to investigate political crimes.

The background to this was a hampered investigation into the biggest corruption case in Brazil's history, the so-called "mensalão" cash-for-votes, which involved top aides of former president Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva bribing members of congress to vote for legislation.

## No appeasement

The protests continued in many cities across Brazil despite a primetime TV speech from President Dilma Rousseff, a former leftist guerrilla who was tortured during Brazil's military dictatorship.

She tried to appease demonstrators by reiterating that "peaceful protests were welcome."

"It was good Dilma spoke, but this movement has moved too far, there was not much she could really say," said Victoria Vilhena, a 21-year-old university student in the São Paulo protest.

"All my friends were talking on Facebook about how she said nothing that satisfied them."

"I think the protests are going to continue for a long time and the crowds will still be huge."

## Free fare movement

The whole movement exploded on 13 June when the Free Fare Movement protests against a hike in public transport fees that disproportionately affected the poor was viciously attacked by the police.

The sight of demonstrators being beaten and tear gassed struck a chord throughout Brazil and tens of thousands mobilised in the nights that followed.

The 13 June demo had been one of a series of recent demonstrations starting with a protest in Natal in August 2012.



The Free Fares Movement goes back even further though.

In 2003, thousands of young people, students, and workers closed the public roads, protesting against higher transport fares.

Over the course of 10 days, the city was paralysed by roadblocks and militant protests.

The events were captured in a film "A Revolta do Buzo".

The demonstrations came to an end when the leaders of traditional student groups (such as the UNE and the UJS) set themselves up as leaders of a revolt they had not started, and went to negotiate with the government.

However in the following years, protests against fare increases were organised in several regions of Brazil, such as São Paulo, Itu, Belo Horizonte, Curitiba, Cuiabá, Porto Alegre, Rio de Janeiro, Brasília, Joinville, Blumenau, Fortaleza, Recife, Aracaju, Rio Branco,

among others.

In 2006, the bus fare was reduced after mass public protests in Vitória.

## Deeper frustration

At the World Social Forum in 2005 the Free Fares Movement emerged with branches in dozens of cities and towns and with its own national newspaper.

So the network around which the present outpouring of popular anger is coalescing was built in the years before the mass anger exploded.

What's different now is that the Free Fares protests have connected with wider anger in society.

The previously mentioned issue of political corruption is huge.

As is the issue of the billions in spending on the world cup.

In the north-eastern city of Salvador, where Brazil's national football team played Italy last week, some 5,000 protesters gathered about five kilometres

from the stadium, shouting demands for better schools and transportation and denouncing heavy spending on the games.

The brutality of the police is another huge issue.

The police have shot indigenous protesters in the last year as well as evicting residents from slums such as the Pinheirinho slum district of São José dos Campos near São Paulo.

Police have attacked peaceful demonstrations of students, staff and professors, wounding numerous demonstrators with rubber bullets, tear gas and pepper spray, in the last few years too.

Human rights watch notes that the police have killed 11,000 people since 2005.

The Free Fares Movement have called further protests but many other groups are now emerging as the struggle continues.

# Thousands march against unemployment in Rome

AROUND 100,000 workers and jobless people marched in Rome on 22 June to protest against record unemployment, calling on Enrico Letta's new government to deliver more than empty rhetoric on the issue.

Saturday's rally, organised by Italy's three largest union confederations, CGIL, CISL and UIL, was the first major protest since Letta's broad coalition took office after an inconclusive election in February.

Italian unemployment hit 12 percent in April, the highest level on record, and joblessness among people under 24 is at an all-time high - above 40 percent.

The protesters demanded growth measures and protection for workers who are sent into pre-retirement without a pension.

Union chiefs including Susanna Camusso, leader of the country's largest union CGIL, criticised Letta for what they called a lack of action on an urgent problem.

"We can't accept these continuous promises that aren't translated into decisions that give a change of direction," Camusso said.

The government released 54bn last week for infrastructure projects to create 30,000 jobs.

But Luigi Angeletti, head of the UIL, said the country could not afford the piecemeal approach to policy adopted so far, especially when the ruling coalition is so fragile.



"In a country where the main concern is betting on how long the government will last, the message is that there is no more time for promises and announcements," he said in Piazza San Giovanni.

Italy's economy has contracted in every quarter since mid-2011 - its longest post-war recession - and companies are steadily shedding staff.

The unions called on the government to intervene to prevent plans by white goods maker Indesit to lay off 1,400 workers in one of the most recent labour disputes.

"Indesit isn't in crisis, it just wants to use its profits to make investments in Turkey and Poland," Camusso said.

Millions of Italians are convinced the search to successfully find work is so futile they have given up looking, so official figures severely underestimate the number of unemployed, according to national statistics office ISTAT.

# Greece: The revolution will be televised

By Panos Gargamas

GREECE'S government was on the verge of collapse as Socialist Worker went to press.

Antonis Samaras' coalition government had tried to shut down the Greek public broadcasting corporation ERT.

This ran into a wall of mass resistance. The cracks between the Tory New Democracy and its coalition partners - Pasok and Dimar - have widened to the point where most people think a general election is imminent.

The first step in this chain of events came on Tuesday 11 June. A mass meeting of ERT workers decided to ignore the government decree shutting down the broadcaster.

## Workers propaganda

They occupied the premises in Aghia Paraskevi, in the north of Athens, and continued operating under their own control.

Unions representing media workers in the private sector called an immediate six-hour stoppage. This left ERT as the only news programme on air.

Some 10,000 people gathered outside the main ERT building, the occupation transmitted the solidarity meeting live.

A wave of enthusiasm spread across the country.

Crowds gathered outside local ERT stations in city after city and foiled police attempts to seize control. TV screens



everywhere were showing trade unionists and political activists, with flags and banners supporting the occupation.

A bright red SEK (Socialist Workers Party) banner proclaiming, "The workers shall never be defeated" flashed across screens again and again.

It was not until late at night that the government was able to seize control of the transmitters and black out screens. But with the help of trade unionists from the telecom

company OTE, the occupiers' programme went on the transmission on the internet.

The government was completely isolated. 150 unions called an indefinite all-out strike shutting down the papers and news programmes apart from stations transmitting the ERT workers' programme.

## Miscalculated

Samaras has badly miscalculated under pressure from the Troika. He wants to act

but the leaders of Pasok and Dimar say that their MPs will not vote for a decree shutting down ERT when it reaches parliament for ratification.

Samaras has to choose between calling a general election and sounding a retreat. Either way, the political crisis will intensify.

The workers' fightback is gaining strength.

It needs all the international solidarity it can get.

Source: Aljazeera News

# Socialist Worker

## G8 security fiasco: Tip of the ice-berg



THOMAS Murray, 21, of Cavendish Street in west Belfast, was arrested as he made his way towards a riot in July 2011.

The police found stones in his pocket.

When the case came to court in May this year, the prosecution agreed there was no evidence Thomas had thrown any of the stones or acted violently in anyway.

He was given 16 months in jail.

Father of five Martin Downey, 35, was seen on the same date approaching police lines with two bottles, one for himself one for another man.

There was no evidence that either of them threw bottles at anyone.

He was jailed for 10 months.

Jean Leathem, 51, from Trillick Street in east Belfast, the main carer of two disabled adult children, pleaded guilty in May to rioting during the "flag" protests last January.

Police argued that she had thrown three pieces of masonry from about 40 yards away.

Lobbed underarm, none of the missiles reached the police vehicles.

She had never been in trouble before, had apologised to the police and told the court through her lawyer that she was "thoroughly ashamed".



She was jailed for eight months. There have been scores of other similar cases this year already - far harsher sentences handed out than the same offences would have drawn at the height of the Troubles.

But no member of the Assembly, no civil liberties group, no liberal lawyer, has voiced concern.

Now that we have "peace", the cops and the courts appear to have carte blanche to smash anyone who steps out of line.

And anybody who objects can be marginalised as an enemy of

peace.

### Fermanagh

This is what links the crack-down on "rioters" with the policing of the G8 in Fermanagh.

At first sight, the PSNI preparations were little short of lunacy.

Three and a half thousand extra police and 800 private "security agents" from the notorious G4 outfit were brought in from Britain.

Chief Constable Matt Baggott spoke of 5,000 "extremist

anarchists" arriving in Fermanagh. Special courts were opened.

More than 300 cells were prepared.

Fourteen judges were withdrawn from the ordinary courts and put on stand-by.

Baggot boasted afterwards that these preparations had prevented violence.

There's an irony here, in that the politicians the PSNI was protecting include the most violent elements on earth.

But even leaving that aside, the

preparations made no sense.

The PSNI will have known that there was no mobilisation taking place in Britain and only small numbers coming from elsewhere in Ireland.

There was never any possibility of serious violence from the protesters. The police preparations were deliberately over the top.

As with alleged rioters in Belfast, the authorities were signalling that they'd crush any challenge to the existing order by any means necessary.

Fermanagh was a training exercise for trouble to come, whether from economic turmoil or a breakdown of the Stormont deal.

Naturally, there wasn't a hint of protest from any Assembly party.

Increasingly, the police and the courts are putting the boot in, while the established politicians, Green as well as Orange, snuggle into their Assembly seats and sing dumb.

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